




Roles of reference laboratories: conclusions of the previous Workshop

THIRD EPPO WORKSHOP FOR HEADS OF PLANT PEST
DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORIES

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Tasks identified as essential

- To establish official diagnostic protocols without duplicating existing work carried out in EPPO. Involvement of NRL scientific staff in the EPPO diagnostic programme should be encouraged. An important task regarding the establishment of official diagnostic protocols is the validation of tests.
- To ensure that official diagnostic protocols are used in the other laboratories performing official plant pest diagnostics in the country and receive feed-back from these laboratories on the protocols.
- To train the staff of other laboratories performing official plant pest diagnostics in the country.
- To participate in proficiency tests
- If necessary and technically possible to organize proficiency tests
- To provide information to the other laboratories performing official plant pest diagnostic in the country on new developments in diagnostics.
- Where relevant, to assist actively in the diagnosis of outbreaks of plant pests by analyzing samples for confirmatory diagnosis, characterization and taxonomic studies.



Tasks considered beneficial but not essential for all NRLs

- To provide technical-scientific support to the NPPO (including contribution to Pest Risk Analysis)
- Participation in research projects including projects on epidemiological studies.
- To establish or be part of a network for international cooperation (e.g. with laboratories in other countries in particular for emerging pests).
- Support for inspection/surveys performed by the NPPO.
- Training of experts from other countries.

Regional laboratories

- It was noted that the establishment of regional laboratories in the EPPO region could be valuable and that their tasks could include:
 - The organization of PT and TPS.
 - The coordination of development of methods and their validation.
 - To provide information on where reference material is available and if relevant to provide such material
 - To provide confirmation of a diagnostic result when required
 - To provide or coordinate training
 - To provide information on new developments in diagnostics
 - However, it was observed that issues such as how these should be funded and what their legal basis could be, need to be resolved. The Workshop was informed of the latest developments in the EU regarding the establishment of EU reference laboratories.



Other considerations & Future

EPPO guidelines should be prepared

- It was considered that it should not be the role of a National Reference laboratory to establish and maintain collections when access to existing collections is available. However maintenance of working collections and distribution of controls is essential.